

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY USSR (Latvian SSR)

DATE DISTR. 14 June 1955

SUBJECT Port of Ventspils

NO. OF PAGES 8

PLACE
ACQUIRED

NO. OF ENCLS.
(LISTED BELOW)

DATE OF
INFO.

SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

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25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

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COUNTRY	USSR	REPORT	
TOPIC	Windau Harbor		25X1
EVALUATION	PLACE OBTAINED		25X1
DATE OF CONT			25X1
DATE OBTAINED		PREPARED	2 May 1955
REFERENCES			
PAGES	7	ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE)	
REMARKS			
This is UNEVALUATED Information			
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1. General geographical, military and economical data.

Windau, is an old Hanseatic town located near the mouth of the Windau (Venta) river at 57°24'N/21°34'E. It is an important (icefree), Soviet naval base, especially for submarine chasers and minesweeping flotillas and also for submarines transferred there from Riga in winter because of ice. It also is an important commercial harbor since it has taken up the majority of the commercial traffic of the port of Libau since the latter port has been closed to merchant shipping.

Windau harbor can be easily mined and also be barred by using the jetties, which project far into the sea. It is a very big garrison, the relation between civilians and soldiers being six to four.

2. Nautical data.a. Approaches:

The approaches to Windau present no particular difficulties. It is advisable to follow the swept channel

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although it is no longer a necessity, as there are no mine fields any longer off Windau, and actually ships were making straight for Windau hugging the coast.

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Making buoy No 5, whose former position was 57°28,5'N/21°21'E

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[] has meanwhile been removed. It has been replaced by a buoy moored five miles from the south jetty head, bearing 324° true from the signal station and moored to the left of the navigable channel in position 57°28,5'N/21°26,5'E. It is a lightbuoy flashing white every ten seconds. A navigable channel leads from this position to the harbor. Ingoing and outgoing vessels should keep the rangelights in one line as carefully as possible. The maximum permissible draft in the channel is 7 meters. All channel buoys, with the exception of the leading buoy, and a wreck-marking buoy were removed []. The wreck-marking buoys moored about 25 meters from the north jetty marking the position of the wreck of a sunken lighter. (57°24'N/21°31'E). On entering Windau one should keep close to the starboard-hand side of the channel. A current of up to 2 knots usually runs along the coast. The approaches as well as the harbor are well lit. The coast on each side of the harbor forms an excellent flat beach with moderately high, partially wooded dunes.

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b. Anchorage:

Well-sheltered anchorages are formed by two jetties, each about 1,800 meters long, and enclosing the mouth of the river and jutting in to the sea. This area which is designated the outer harbor, can berth up to three ships. Vessels riding at anchor there can be loaded and unloaded by lighters. It is not advisable to anchor outside the jetties, as the anchorages there are unsheltered and rough ground swell usually prevails there. Heavy ground swell also prevails in the outer harbor with strong winds blowing continuously from the northwest.

d. Tides, ice conditions:

There are no tides in this region. Under ordinary circumstances, navigation is not closed because of ice. In January and February, however, it may happen that shipping is hindered by ice. The berths alongside the quays are always free of ice throughout the winter because of the strong running current.

d. Pilots:

The pilot station [] is located on the south bank of the river close to harbor entrance. The pilot is asked for in the daytime by hoisting the pilot jack and at night by flashing signals. He will board the incoming vessel about 2 or 3 miles outside the jetties. The pilot boat is a rather modern wooden boat painted white and about 10 meters long.

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3. Harbor Installations (military).

- a. The navy harbor and the berths for naval vessels are located on the south bank of the river, prolongation of which is the south jetty, which projects about 1,200 meters into the sea. The naval harbor reaches as far as the winter harbor [] which is separated from the fairway by dolphins. The naval wharf consists of piled-in dolphins with a wooden revetment at the back. A wooden house with a tower [] with a signal station [] at the rear is located on this south bank close to the entrance. The landing basin for fishing vessels where the catches are landed is located east of the signal station (fishing harbor []-).

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A marine railway and a lifeboat station are located between the signal station and the fishing harbor [redacted]

Two three-storied brick buildings [redacted] about 100 meters long and used as naval barracks, and the former Windau Penitentiary [redacted] of unidentified use, are located on the naval wharf. 25X1

A large red brick building (naval barracks) with a flat roof, is located south of the winter harbor. A signal station [redacted] is fitted on the flat roof and consists of a hut, a signal searchlight and a radio mast. The signal station is manned day and night, maintaining signal communication with the ships moored in harbor. 25X1

The area around the naval barracks installations is separated from the landward area by a board fence about 2.5 meters high, and fitted with a single small gate, guarded by a sentry and leading the landing stage of the ferry [redacted]. 25X1

A double railroad track, beginning at the jetty, extends as far as the naval barracks, when it bends towards the south.

b. Bridges and locks:
Not available at the naval wharf.

c. Cranes and shipping appliances:
Not available at the naval wharf.

d. Tugboats, lighters, and icebreakers:
See 4 d.

e. Shipyards:
No shipyards are available in the harbor district. ~~The naval harbor~~
The naval harbor is permanently occupied by numerous submarine chasers and mine sweepers (30 to 40) and a certain numbers of submarines, ^{the} total of which is increased during the winter season.

4. Harbor installations (commercial section):

a. Quay installations:

The north and east banks of the Windau river which, upriver from the elevator quay, bend toward the south and are reserved for merchant shipping.

The north jetty begins about 1,200 meters north from the mouth of the river. A dredged channel, 7.9 meters deep and 100 meters wide, runs through the harbor entrance, which is 350 meters wide. The north bank between root of the jetty and the bend of the river has a total length of 1,150 meters. It consists of the following portions: A sloping revetment with no buildings near the root of the jetty is followed by a waiting quay [redacted] of wooden pier wharves. 25X1

The waiting pier, at which the ships must wait until a berth is available alongside the elevator quay, is about 200 meters long. It is followed by a quay section needing repair, and by the elevator quay [redacted], forming the last stretch of 400 meters of the north bank. 25X1

The quay wall of the elevator quay is made of stone and revetted with wooden boards. The stone surface consists of cobble stones. The water alongside the quay is 6 meters deep.

The bend of the river has no quay wall.

The custom-house and coal quay [redacted] forming the east bank is about 25X1

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600 meters long. It is made of cement and stone about 1.5 meters high above the water level, and 6.5 meters deep;

Quay installations:

A new fish cannery [] with a watertower about 40 meters high [] at the rear, is located near the waiting quay. 25X1

Four tiers of sheds [] are arranged terrace-like one behind the other at the elevator quay. The basement of the sheds therefore can receive cargo from the one side, while the first story can be loaded or unloaded from the opposite side. A seven-story red-brick grain elevator [] is also located there. The 25 usable sheds and the grain elevator have a total capacity of about 150,000 tons. The crane installation on the elevator quay comprises: 25X1

- 4 older-type electrically operated 5-ton slewing cranes []
- 3 Diesel driven 3.5-ton gantry cranes [] running on tracks
- 1 electrically operated travelling crane [], and
- 1 grain conveyer []

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Spur tracks are laid on each side of the sheds. A lumber yard with a small sawmill [] and a water tower north of it [] are located at the river bend at the point where the custom-house pier begins. 25X1

Four older-type brick warehouses [] are located at the customs and coal quay, about 60 meters from the edge of the quay facing the water frontage with their gables. Low and long new warehouses [] are located in the northern section. A cold-storage house [] and a custom-house [] are located at the rear of the large 45-ton crane []. 25X1

The following cranes are available at the custom-house and coal quay: 25X1

- 1 stationary 45-ton crane [] with four rather strong corner pillars imbedded in the cement foundation. The jib of this crane is about 20 meters above the ground. 25X1
- 4 electric slewing cranes [], the first two having a lifting capacity of 2.2 tons each, the four other ones having a lifting capacity of 5 tons each. All cranes run on tracks. 25X1

Four cranes are installed at the rear of these six cranes including:

- 2 small-sized cranes [] mounted on a coal dump to load or unload railroad cars. They are diesel-driven cranes [] (floating cranes chocked up ashore). 25X1
- 2 bridge cranes with grabs having a lifting capacity of 30 tons [] each. 25X1

Lumber and coal berths are located in the southern section of the custom-house and coal quay. The coal, mostly intended for export, arrives on railroad cars and is unloaded with cranes. The ships taking on the coals from the dumps are serviced either by the stationary cranes or a floating crane.

Two railroad tracks, one located 25 meters and the other 100 meters away from the edge of the quay, service the entire quay area. The custom-house and coal quay premises are surrounded by a cement wall 2.5 meters high. The passages for the tracks are closed by doors. Three four-storied brick houses of yellow tiles with large windows and between forty and fifty meters long [], are located outside the surrounding wall east of the street. 25X1

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b. Bridges and locks:

One road bridge [] and a railroad bridge span the river. []

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A new pontoon bridge [] with a capacity of 24 tons, the central part of which can be opened, is located south of the custom-house and coal quay.

Traffic between the north bank and the south bank of the river bend is maintained by a ferry [].

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c. Transport installation:

Shunting service on the railroad tracks around the harbor sheds is done by Diesel locomotives. The cars used have four-axle with an approximate loading capacity of 40 tons and are in a first-class condition. Refrigerator cars are used for shipping meat.

d. Tugboats, lighters and icebreakers:

Three powerful tugs of about 600 horsepower and over, [] are stationed in Windau. In addition to tugboat Taifun serving as a navy tug and a fire boat, the tugs Neptun and ALK are available in Windau. In case of necessity, the tugboats are also used for icebreaking services. Several lighters are available. Two suction dredges are stationed in Windau.

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e. Shipyards:

No shipyard is available in Windau. Only a small shipbuilding and engine shop capable of carrying out minor repairs are available.

5. Military Installations (outside the harbor premises proper)a. Fortifications:

[] no fortifications are located in or around Windau.

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b. Radar, radio and signal stations:

A wooden lattice tower with a platform and twelve pole masts (20 meters high) belonging to that installation are located about 2 kilometers south of the town in a forest.

A firmly built-in searchlight [] permanently floodlighting the head of the south jetty, is located west of the pilot tower. Another searchlight [] firmly mounted on a pedestal and sweeping the sector of the sea between the jetty-head of the south jetty in a southerly direction, is located about 2 kilometers south of that emplacement.

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Three searchlights are located north of the harbor entrance. []

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6. Guard Service.

The entire harbor area of the naval and commercial harbors is closely guarded. A Soviet guard of two or three sentries is posted at the root of the south jetty.

The elevator quay, the custom-house and coal quay as well as the naval harbor, are surrounded by walls or barbed wire fences. Soldiers with bayonets fixed are posted at the gates or stand watch on small watchtowers. Mounted police patrol the harbor area and sentries are posted at the landing stages.

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A signal station [] is located on the roof of the barracks installations near the winter harbor. A searchlight [], located east of this position and mounted on a wooden structure, 6 meters high, sweeps the harbor area at irregular intervals.

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Safety measures aboard incoming or outgoing merchant vessels are performed in the same manner as in Soviet ports (search of the ship, locking up binoculars, and cameras, sealing the radio equipment etc.)

The crews of the ships meet no difficulty or restriction in communicating with the civilian population and normal shore leave is granted. The guard units in harbor [] are very helpful.

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7. Connection with the Interior of the Country.

a. Railroad:

The connection with the harbor across the concrete railroad bridge is good. The broad-gage line leading to Tukum (Tukums) in an easterly direction links the harbor with the railroad network of the country. Narrow-gage railroads run northward in the direction of Mazirbe and Dudaga.

b. Inland waterways:

No waterways of any importance.

c. Streets and roads:

A sufficient number of streets are available within the harbor district. The town streets are paved with irregular cabbie stones and there are very small sidewalks. Second-class roads extend in all directions into the interior of the country.

d. Air Traffic:

No air traffic.

8. Shipping Capacities.

a. Turnover:

In comparison with the pre-war years, the turnover in Windau is steadily on the increase and there is every prospect that it will continue to grow because of the fact that Libau is longer be a commercial harbor.

Shipping volume increase during the winter season in relation to the situation in spring, as the ships bound for Leningrad are forced to call at Windau, because of ice conditions farther east.

Imports: Lead, engine components, generator sets, cement, frozen meat.

Exports: Anthracite-coal, grains, oilcake, colza, naphthalene, pig iron.

b. Statistics:

Total turnover in 1937 amounted to 400,000 tons, breaking into an export volume to 310,000 tons, mainly consisting of lumber, grains, flax and hemp, and an import of 90,000 tons, consisting of coal and mixed cargo.

Turnover in 1947, amounted to about 250,000 tons. Imported goods mainly consisted of commodities arriving from Germany, such as sugar, buna rubber, and textiles.

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-8-c.. Labor conditions:

Loading operations continue smoothly and uninterruptedly, either in three 8-hours or two 12-hour shifts.

The average age of the longshoremen ranges between 20 and 30 years and the foremen are older. Women workers are employed in large numbers, even as crane operators. The workers up to the rank of foremen are Latvians or Russians, and all posts above foremen are held only by Russians. All key persons are Russians.

A foreman in the harbor makes 1,000 rubles a month, while the other workers and women only get 800 rubles, which considering living costs are low wages.

During the winter the longshoremen in Windau are reinforced by laborers from Leningrad to assure smooth loading and unloading operations.

9. Supplying Facilities:

- a. An oil storage depot [] consisting of two overground oil tanks, is installed south of the custom-house and coal quay. A navy tanker for oiling PT boats is available in the harbor. 25X1
- b. Coal:
A bunkering coal depot [], storing a total of about 1,500 tons of coal is located opposite the oil tank depot [], in addition to the coal dumps located on the custom-house and coal quay. Bunkering coal is carried alongside the ships in lighters. 25X1
- c. Water:
A watertower [], 40 meters high, is located on the north bank close to the harbor entrance, and another recently-built watertower lies north of the bend of the river []. Water can be tapped from the town water mains by means of hand pumps. 25X1
- d. Electricity:
Windau is an important port as a Soviet naval base as well as a commercial harbor, in particular in winter when the ice conditions make impossible any shipping to and from ports located farther east. Several exercise areas located west of Windau are continuously used by Soviet submarine chasers and minesweeping flotillas (in cooperation with submarines) stationed in Windau. 25X1

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